

# UPSTAIRS BULLETIN

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## NO RESOLUTIONS THIS YEAR

The smoke signals from the Wigwam at 20 North Wacker Drive were strangely silent this year - no resolutions. Could it be that her own attempts were so embarrassing that it would be wiser to shut up?

## CHRISTMAS AT KEY WEST

Key West is a unique island out into the Gulf of Mexico, just 57 miles south and west of Miami and 90 miles north of Havana Cuba. From the Florida mainland to Key West is a string of thousands of islands strung together like pearls and connected by a highway with many bridges. It is Florida's second oldest city - is tropical and is said to have never had a frost. In 1933 it was the poorest city per capita in the USA and in 1840 it was the wealthiest. The island is 1 1/4 miles wide and 4 1/2 miles long.

We were fascinated by the beautiful old houses with their rambling ornamental porches - once called "Widows Walks" - where ship movements could be observed. The architecture is a delightful blend of Bahama and Spanish influences with overtones of New England and the Deep South. The restored Audubon Home, now a museum, is in exquisite taste, while the Hemingway home is a rambling wreck - crawling with cats and unless it gets some care soon will fall apart or be eaten up by the jungle that surrounds it. At Sloppy Joe's Bar, Hemingway's hangout, an excellent New Orleans Jazz group entertained every afternoon. This really drew in the characters but shirts and shoes were required. The gardens and flowers were of special interest to me - the violent rich colors of the crotons in

every yard - Bougainvillea crawling over fences and up trees - red yellow and orange hibiscus the size of butter plates - orchid and tulip trees and the bottle brush bush adding a splash of color here and there - now and then a flaming poinsetta bush, startling against a white house - the heavy seductive scent of the jasmine - all in all helped to make this a holiday to remember.

On the way home we had a lay over in Miami for four hours, where Juanita (Garber) and Douglas Weir picked us up and drove us to their lovely home in the outskirts of the city. Juanita had a splendid luncheon ready. Justin, their adopted 5 1/2 year old son entertained us royally with his almost adult asides as he performed magical tricks. In fact, they are a super trio and deserve each other. Juanita has always been like a breath of fresh air in the sunshine and fun to be with.

The holiday season brings out the news for which we are grateful. CHERIE MC CULLOUGH MEERBOER is expecting their first in April and she still claims to be jogging 5 to 10 miles a day and has earned her brown belt (whatever that means) and is a dedicated duck hunter. Also a pleasant note from MAGGIE SMITH BRAUN who will also become a mother sometime in April. She is living a secluded and remote life in Prescott, Arizona and what seems to be a happy existence. All very hard to understand when you remember some of her very touching and beautiful performances in the past. ANNA MARIE SAGI wrote that RALPH LINN is now a neighbor of hers in Tampa Florida. Ralph is back in dance and has opened a school with his wife in Clearwater Florida. Brother of BAMBI LINN he was an exceedingly talented dancer who had too much emphasis on earning money. If he is teaching dance now he must certainly have recovered from that. NANCY MC CLOUD

has kept busy the past three summers dancing in shows in and about New York. DEAN DIGGINS has recently written a book on psychology - "The Human Personality" to be published in February. Still a professor at Brooklyn College - no dancing but studying piano at Juilliard. All this from one who was really a success at dance one time. Each year we receive a gratifying letter from JOAN FEIERBEND KENAS who is now an important music teacher in Rochester New York schools. She is persistent in saying that her inspiration began completely at SC - which flatters us immensely - knowing that if we cannot make dancers out of them we can influence them into the sister arts. Often these people go further than some of the dance students. Another SC boy has "had" New York and has retired to his home town in Excelsior Springs Missouri. JOHN WIDMER is not at all unhappy about leaving that city...the city so many young people dream of as if it were the pearly gates. Recently DIANA & DAN REILY made a quick trip to Germany where they tried out for work next fall in Munich, Frankfurt, Stuttgart and Hamburg. It appears it was a fruitful and rewarding trip for them. Also there at this moment is TRACEY HUNTLEY doing the same rounds. VANNESSA MERIA still writes with pleasure of her activities at the Opera Company in Lubeck. Actually she is doing about what we did 40 years at the old Chicago Civic Opera Company. Which is better experience than dancing here at the Chicago Ballet Company or the Lyric. It appears that Germany is now becoming overrun with dancers from all over the world looking for work in either Opera or ballet. In the past 25 years we have had as pupils, three extremely funny and loveable comedians - CHAUNCE CONKLIN, now in Dinner Theatre work down state - TOM POSTON whom we haven't heard of much lately and JAY DEVLIN who has been a "smashing hit" in "Where's Charley" and was in Robert Redford's movie "3 Days of the Condor" and many commercials. He is now in an off Broadway play "The Hot L Baltimore".

He always seems to work. Former RANDI SCHULTZ, now GARNER seems to have taken up a new career in Dallas Texas.. looking sleek and frightfully thin danced recently with Robert Scevers who partnered DOLORES LIPINSKI a year ago with the Chicago Ballet. Randi had an unhappy alliance in the Feld Ballet and gave up. We are happy she is now back because she had too much to give and why worry about New York? From the same period DONNA RYAN is now in Midland Michigan where EDITH HENNINGTON hails from. BARBARA RUBENSTEIN - recently here played with success in the Musical "Bubbling Brown Sugar" on its way to Broadway. Barbara now a jazz dancer did remarkably well in ballet class while here. ALBIA KAVAN COOPER - who played the part of "a Maid in her teens" in the Goodman performance of "That Daring Young Man" is now unhappily retired in Jackson Mississippi. Incidentally "That Daring Young Man" is now in rehearsal for our spring performances. MARY RANDOLPH will dance the part Albia Kavan danced. We were pleased to finally get a note from KELLY BROWN during the holidays. The other boys of that period have taken to having their spouses do the Christmas honors - cannot believe they are all so busy that a personal note cannot be mailed. (at least once a year) KEVIN KELLY BROWN - our Godson is now in Hollywood working in and about the movies with the help of Herbie Ross. Kevin has become an excellent correspondent - writing with wit and intelligence and with a great deal of personal feeling - please don't change Kevin. DARRELL NOTARA and his wife join those with dancing schools to hold them down. The past year was kind to three of our Alumni - NAOMI SORKIN in the Feld Company comes out great in reviews - even from the tyrant - Croce. BONNIE LARSON in Ballet Theatre and PEGGY LYMAN in the Martha Graham company have been doing equally well in the press. One who does not seem to be doing that well with the critics is JOHN NEUMEIER - which may or may not mean to much. The press generally likes to knock down those who seem to be getting too much. It appears that LARRY & DOLORES LONG will soon be leaving that troubled area - The Chicago Ballet - for a new company being organized

in London for South Africa. Everyone wishes them happiness and success in this venture. Our holidays were saddened by the news of SANDRA GIBSON's death - In the old Chicago Civic Sandy was known as SANDRA DAVIS or DEVINE. She will be best remembered for her great performance of Nelly Bly in the Ballet "Frankie and Johnny" at the Federal Theatre. She was also a member of our Vaudeville act out of the Morris office in Chicago. Other members of the act were HARRIET LUNDGREN, TERESA RUDOLPH, BENTLEY STONE and Myself.

This year we were indeed fortunate to see NAOMI SORKIN dance with the Eliot Feld Company. She danced only in "Intermezzo" and "Mazurka" but it was worth having to sit through Feld's very busy - very complicated choreography in "Consort" and "Harbinger". Feld's inventive webwork of intricate movement patterns absorbs one for a while but ends up as a busy monotone while the dancers are killing themselves. This kind of choreography leaves little possibility for the dancer to project any personal charm. Somehow - at least - in the Brahms Naomi was able to reach a point of complete command of every movement and musical phrase and still come across as a personality. Naomi was in our school from 1961 through 1967 - dancing in the spring concerts for four of those years before going to Denmark with JUDY CONWAY to try out for the Royal Danish company. The SC Ballet will do two performances at the Riverside Junior High School February 20th - the fifth time we have played this school. The regular Spring Concerts will be April 30th and May 1st and 2nd.

The following article by Martha Woollett was in response to the article in the last Bulletin on "Loie Fuller" and it is printed here because it rather proves a point - that no person is a huge success without someone else in the background.

## "AND YOU NEVER MENTIONED HER BROTHER"

- Martha Woollett.

A long time ago, shortly after my father died in my early teens.... that would be about the end of the French and Indian War...my Mother, a practical nurse, had a terminal patient out in Hinsdale. After Mr. Heineman died, she stayed on as a companion to his wife for about a year. I made a visit out there, to this magnificent house of the turn of the century, with white bear skin rugs on the floor, huge bad paintings in thick gold leaf frames and a front hall about the size of the Aragon Dance floor. They were very rich and 12 to 14 people to lunch or breakfast even was nothing...and Mrs Heineman did most of the cooking.

Mrs. Heineman had a brother visiting there at the time, a diamond merchant with offices in the loop and he had known Loie Fuller. His story about her intrigued me and I eventually emptied the Public Library of information.

Her brother was her "Light Man" and travelled with her on all her tours to operate the special affects that he designed for her. Electric use for more than just lighting up a stage must have been really quite new to audiences. The present art of stage lighting owes much to this talented man and to his sister who used to such good affect, his abilities, and who worked with him so closely.

Loie Fuller's popularity was very great, a theatre was named after her in Paris and she made a lot of money. And altho, with her brother she contributed much to the glamor of the dance stage of that era, she also was very important to the easel artists of Paris. Her Paris was the Paris of the Impressionists, struggling for recognition of their strange and radical paintings and most of them were poor beyond belief. With her money but without the sage advice of her contemporary art



buyers, the Havemayers, coached and guided by Mary Cassatt...Loie Fuller bought paintings Gauguins, Cezannes, Picassos, whatever. It is hoped she bought them because she liked them, it is certain it was also out of a goodness of heart. Thus her contribution is to more than one of the arts.

No one knows on what walls these paintings hang today, their voyages from one to another swallowed up in the endless exchange of paintings for dollars that takes place when at long last the artist is recognized as genius and often long after his need for dollars has vanished. A buyer in 1870 or 75 or 80 was indeed an angel, angel of Light! Thank you Loie! It was nice of you to be born in Illinois.

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#### QUOTE FROM AN ARTICLE BY SYDNEY HARRIS ON CRITICS

"In all the arts, books, music, paintings, drama and the dance, a critic is considered a second class citizen by most editors and news directors. They assume that almost anyone competent in general news reporting can take on a critical post at a moment's notice.

This is largely because they themselves are news-oriented and don't think anything truly important unless it emanated from the corridors of power. "Art" and "Culture" and that is just so much fluff to them, stuck in to pacify the minority who bother themselves about such piffling matters.

As a result, most critics they pick are grossly unqualified for the jobs. Nobody knows or cares except the few performers who come to town, or a handful of cognoscenti who get their cultural information from more elevated sources."

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